June 2015
A.S L

The 12th Century Issue

THE BARONY OF DRAGONSSPINE

Meiassis Dragon

Apse mosaic (detail) 1145-60 Mosaic Cathedral, Cefalù
Beneath the apse calotte with its Pantocrator figure the mosaic is divided into three registers. Mary occupies the center of the top one, where she is pictured as an intercessor in the pose of an orant, seen from the front and with her hands raised in prayer.

Jaufre Rudel (d.c. 1148)
(The Castellan of Blaye, he flourished early to mid 12th century and probably died during the Second Crusade, 1147-9. His 13th century biography claims he fell in love with the Countess of Tripoli without ever having seen her and after taking ship for Tripoli fell ill during the voyage, ultimately dying in the arms of his 'love afar').

Quan lo rius de la fontana

When the sweet fountain's stream
Runs clear, as it used to do,
And there the wild-roses blow,
And the nightingale, on the bough,
Turns and polishes, and makes gleam
His sweet song, and refines its flow,
It's time I polished mine, it would seem.

Oh my love, from a land afar,
My whole heart aches for you;
No cure can I find, for this no
Help but your call, I vow,
With love's pangs sweetest by far,
In a curtained room or meadow,
Where I and the loved companion are.

I shall lack that forever though,
So no wonder at my hunger now;
For never did Christian lady seem
Fairer – nor would God wish her to –
Nor Jewess nor Saracen below.
With manna he's fed as if in dream,
Who of her love should win a gleam!

No end to desire will my heart know
For her, whom I love most, I vow;
I fear lest my will should cheat me,
If lust were to steal her from me too.
For sharper than thorns this pain and woe
The sadness that joy heals swiftly,
For which I want no man's pity.

Without parchment brief, I bestow
On Filhol the verses I sing now,
In the plain Romance tongue, that he
May take them to Uc le Brun, anew.
They rejoice in it, I'm pleased to know,
In Poitou, and in Berry,
In Guyenne, and Brittany.

Note: Uc le Brun is Uc VII of Lusignan, who had taken the cross for the Second Crusade in 1147. Filhol is the name of the *joglar* (*jongleur*, or minstrel)

Image is from the Palatine Chapel (Cappella Palatina), Palermo, Sicily

Upcoming Events

13-14 June Enduro—Caer Galen#

13-18 June Lillies War—Calontir*

18-21 June Northern Realms War—Northshield*#

19-21 June Citadel Hatilude—Citadel of the Southern Pass

26-28 June Aarquelle Highlands Rapier Camp—Aarquelle*#

26-28 June Heroes and Legends—Unser Hafen

27 June Nock on Wood—al-Barran

2-6 July Keepers of the Dry Stone—Drygestan*

10-12 July Rio Defender—Rio de las Animas*

11 July Monkey's Quest for the Unicorn Horn—Caer Galen

17-19 July Fighters Folly 2—Caerthe

24-26 July Here There Be Dragons—Plattefordham

24-26 July Mountain Pass and Highland Games IX—Bryngolau

31 July-7 Aug Pennsic—East Kingdom*

15 August Fall Crown Tournament—Caer Galen*#

22 August Saint Sebastian's—Hawks Hollow

2-7 Sept Battlemoor—Outlands*#

3-7 Sept Known World Metal & Glass—Northshield—Minnesota

11-13 Sept Clann Wars—Nahrun Kabirun*

* Event is on TRM Progress
# Event is on TE Dragonsspine's Progress

Meeting Minutes

Dragonsspine Baronial Meeting
May 4, 2015

Meeting led by Don Gianni Sangermano, Seneschal

Local Events:
Feast of Fools: Report given by Lady Elora Von Effyn. Held April 4, 2015. 121 people attended; 19 non-members. There were 15 rapier fighters with Lord Seamus Macrae winning the event; 8 heavy fighters with Victor Thrand Elrick winning; 16 participants in the nerf archery contest and the prize went to Lord Rinotulema Kuresaare from Caerthe. The new King of Misrule was granted to Ethan Robertson. The event made $595.
Mayday: May 2, 2015; Report will be given by Duchess Selene at next meeting.

Baronial Business:
Intent for Quartermaster: David Tretelgja will be taking over for Sir Alaric Razvedchikov.
Candlemas: One bid has been placed for 2016 Candlemas by Lady Jeannette de Vallier. Co-autocrat will be Lady Angel d'Auvergne. THLady Bronwen will do the feast and Altani Sechen will provide the donation lunch again. Any other bids for Candlemas must be in by the next Barony meeting.
Gold Key: Lady Basseva gave the Gold Key report; new people have been using and borrowing garb.
Exchequer: Lady Abigail gave the Exchequer report; there are lots of monies in the account.
Archery: Bernard, Cpt of Archery gave a report and discussed issues with the web-site and May Day event.
Minister of the List: Master Duncan, MOL was not in attendance; report to be given next meeting.
Herald: Duchess Selene, Herald, gave a report on names, devices and house-hold names waiting to be approved.
Chronicler: Madame Adelaisa, Chronicler, announced that the newsletter has been published and that she has offered to send it to individual emails if requested.
Minister of Children: Lord Ramon de Javier and Lady Oriana Shank, Ministers of Children gave a report. They are looking into implementing new and improved youth combat standards, weapons and armor in the near future.

Announcements: A new Court Herald is still needed; please put in letters of intent and talk to Their Excellency's if interested please.

Meeting adjourned 8pm.
YIS, Lady Lillianna Hampton

Greetings unto the fine populace of Dragonsspine!

With the changing of the guard of our stores, I hereby request if you have items belonging to the Barony, they be returned. The reason for this is so a true and accurate inventory can be made. I can normally be found at fighter practice Thursday evenings; I am hoping to be able to attend archery practice on Sundays; and am normally at the business meeting.

If none of these work for you, you may also drop the items off at my residence – 1107 Royale, 80910.

Yours in Service,
David Tretelgja

Dragonsspine Trim Project

Some time ago, there was a hope to create trim for Dragonsspine. The person driving the project has since left the group and the project never got off the ground. Since I volunteered to be point on another trim research project, I thought I'd see if there was interest in pursuing the Dragonsspine trim project again. We would need a base order of 1100 yards so we need firm commitments to yardage before we begin the process of trim creation with the merchant.

We will be working with Calontir Trim. If you've purchased their lovely trim before, you already know they make quality items. Their Outlands trim was wonderful and they carry many other heraldic trim styles that are similar to the specs we are looking at. On their website, you can see Ansteorra and Northshield Griffon with similar specs. There are so many pages of trim that I just grabbed a couple of examples.

The trim design is:

Width: 1.55 inches Non-Metallic Yellow/Gold background
Purple Dragonsspine Dragon (as featured on the populace pins) repeating every 3 inches
Cost per yard **$1.50** (not including any shipping and handling costs)

At this time we are surveying to determine interest in pursuing the project. No money is needed at this time. If there is sufficient interest in making the purchase, we'll get details and collect funds at the time of order. The overall project from trim design proof to manufacturer delivery is estimated to be 6 months but if the merchant's supplier is booked it could be as long as one year before delivery.

If you would be interested in purchasing trim, please contact leofsige@yahoo.com with your name, email, amount you would be willing to purchase. We are currently at 40% of our goal. We can't begin the process until we have commitments for at least 90% of the trim. If you'd like to have dragon trim (even if you aren't a member of Dragonsspine), please contact me to be added to the list.

Thanks!
Lyssa

Caerthen 12th Night, January 2, 2016 – A Night in Muscovy
Adams County Fairgrounds, Brighton, CO

Come, traveler, come in from the cold! Enjoy the warmth of Caerthen hospitality as we visit the Russian land. Delicious food, rich garb, dancing and song, all in good company. Watch this space for more details to come.

Event Stewards: Master Johann and Mistress Kseniya
(Brian and Melissa Morman)

Feast Stewards: Lady Elaisse and Lady Isabella
(Christina and Jamie Morris)

Well met Outlands!

Fire season has well and truly begun. We have already had some small fires in the Kingdom, and we have had days of Extreme fire danger throughout the whole Kingdom. Have you taken a look at your yard? Do you have a defensible space cleared around your house? Now is the time to get your home ready. Here is a link to help you get stared.

http://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/

YIS,
Isabel Benet
Disaster Relief Coordinator

"The worst mistake you can make is to live in fear that you'll make a mistake" -Guy Belleranti

Do you KNOW you are coming to Battlemoor VI? Pre-register!

The above link will take you to the Battlemoor VI page with a fillable and
printable form for pre-registration.
If your form filling style is less than legible PLEASE fill out the form online before you print and mail.

Paid parking is executive close in parking, general parking is still free.

Members please fill in the membership number line. Check your dates, will
you still be a member for Battlemoor.

Baron Knut Eldfimr
Battlemoor VI Gate coordinator

News Bits

Greetings!

The next Dirty Dozen Donation Derby (aka 4D) will be held at Battlemoor VI, September 5, 2015, to benefit the Crowns attending Battlemoor.

There will be two sponsored themes suggested by Their Majesties Tam and Kathryn: Sharp Arrow and Scottish. These two themes will have a special prize for the favorite dozen from each theme. Because Sharp Arrow is both a Grant Level award in the Outlands and a recognized archery concept, entries can bear the badge of the order and be given to the Outlands Crown for distribution, bear the badges of orders of archery orders from kingdoms whose Crowns will be attending, or be archery related. All badges must be clearly identified for order and kingdom. Scottish items may be anything that fits the theme and will be split as the other dozens.

Basic Rules

- Create a Baker's Dozen (13) items that are suitable for largesse and based on a theme.

- Entry is open to everyone.

- All entries must be tagged and ready to be gifted the day of the competition.

- No liquids or perishables.

- Tightly wrap all scented items to prevent cross-scenting.

- No Documentation Needed.

- Group and Award Heraldry is permitted but must be clearly identified. No personal or household heraldry.

- Package for safe transport, especially the little stuff.

Additional information and frequently asked questions are available on the Facebook event.

In Service,

THL Lêofsige Õ Caoimh known as Lyssa

The mysterious bliaut revealed by Mistress Enid d'Auliere, OL

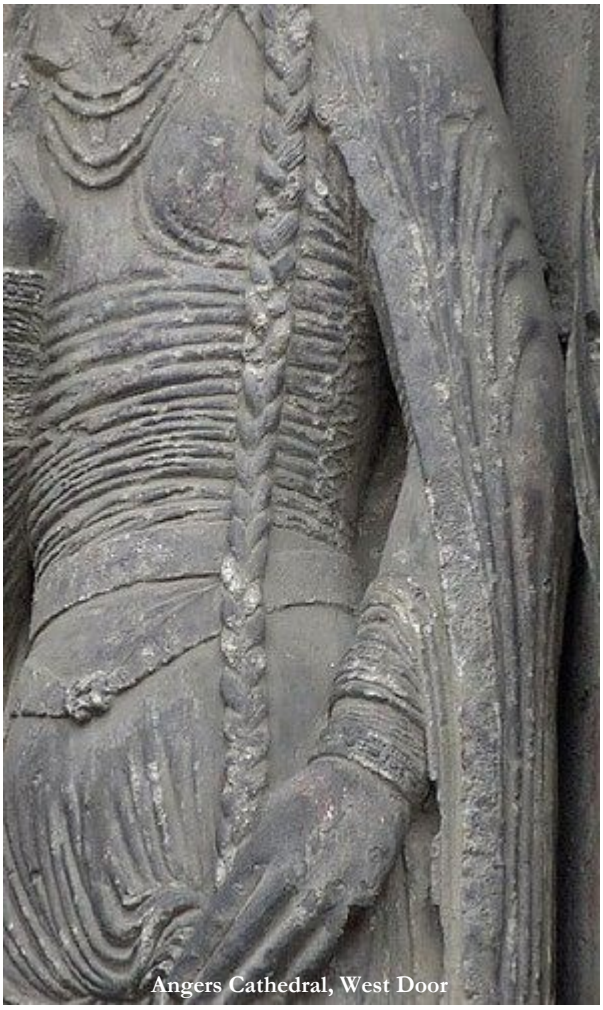
The Mystery:
A garment called a Bliaut appeared in the historical record from about 1120 to about 1170, then was replaced by the form fitting cotehardie, along with the secret of it's construction. The bliaut seemed to be a form fitting lady's garment (though there was a men's version that I will address in a different article) from the shoulder to the hips, then fell from the hips to the floor in graceful pleats, almost accordian-like. There seems to be a large girdle or belt around the midsection of the garment, obscuring how this garment might have been achieved. Often the bliaut was depicted with wide sleeves on the overdress and a tight fitted sleeve on the underdress. In the few descriptions we find from the period, it is mentioned that the dress was often made of fine silk, rich and beautiful fabrics that would have cost a king's ransom in the early middle ages, though it could be made of other fabrics as well, which would have been most likely fine wool or linen.

This graceful garment has intrigued historians and costumers for ages. It has an elegant line to it, seemingly light and flowing even in stone. But the stone has kept it's secret and the bliaut continued to be a mystery in the costuming world. Many theories have been put forth to explain the seemingly unexplainable. The Victorians depicted the bliaut as having a large, quilted, fitted girdle around the midsection, almost like the beginnings of a corset. Other theories have included the possibility of the bodice and skirt being separate pieces, though other examples of that skill waited for centuries to appear; wide skirts with inserted gores or even netting between a short bodice and dropped skirt. Unfortunately, none of these theories successfully explained the appearance of the dress within the skills known to be available to the seamstresses of the time. None of them truly explained the odd middle section and what that might have been even if they might have explained the construction of the dress. The mystery remained.

The Detective Work:
I had determined that there had to be an answer to the riddle of the bliaut that fitted with the known skills of the seamstresses and needle workers of the period. I just had to find it, that's all. So, lets take a look at this garment once again. The bliaut is a fitted garment from the shoulder to the hips ending in close pleats that fall to the floor. The midsection is fitted with "something" similar to an expanded belt or corset and obviously decorated, primarily in horizontal markings. The skirt falls from the this midsection to the floor in graceful, close pleats and doesn't appear to be much larger at the bottom of the skirt than at the top of the skirt, making it also pretty close fitting. The sleeves seem to be large and often bordered with either embroidery or woven trim. The neckline of the bliaut is wider and often a "V" neckline or a keyhole neckline, both being used at differing times with decoration around the neck, either trim or embroidery. The underdress seems to be unremarkable, a round neckline and long, tapered sleeves that seem to lace at the wrists.

Now, let's look at how this garment might have been constructed starting with a couple of basic assumptions. Assumption number one is that the garment is one piece from shoulder to floor. The reason I am assuming this is that there is no other garment with a separated bodice and skirt until the 15th century. I can safely assume that this knowledge was unlikely to have been gained and lost in the space of 50 years. Assumption number two is that the dress appeared as depicted in the statuary and drawings of the period. Given those two assumptions, the question for any good seamstress is if the pleats end at the floor, where do they need to begin?

Given assumption number one, the answer to that question is at the top. The pleats had to begin at the shoulder to be able to appear as they did at the hips and fall to the floor. They had to be folded on the straight of the grain of the fabric (or the warp) in order to fall so straight and gracefully to the floor. It's in the nature of fabric itself. That means that the whole garment had to be shaped by manipulating the fabric by pleating it from the shoulder to the hips creating the pleated skirt. Let me say that again because it's the key to the whole dress. The fabric is manipulated into place by a series of pleats from the shoulder to the hips. Looking at the garment



Angers Cathedral, West Door

The mysterious bliaut revealed...continued

again, I determined that my garment would be pleated at the shoulder and again at the midsection to create the fitted silhouette shown in the statuary from the [OB] period of the actual garment.

The next question is what is that stuff in the middle? Is that some kind of belt, sash, corset? What are those horizontal lines? If it is a belt in itself, why is there another belt over it? In the construction of the dress, I found the answer to this problem as well.

What we are seeing, or so I believe, is the pleating around the middle to fit the garment, sewn down to secure the pleats and embroidered over with decorative stitches to make it pretty. The process of pleating stiffens and thickens the fabrics and the decorative stitching further enforces the structure the pleating began, giving the midsection the signature stiff and quilted appearance. This leaves the skirt to drop from the hips to the floor in the graceful and close pleats we see in the statuary. The pleats are vertical so the stitching to secure them would be best if they were horizontal, giving the midsection it's signature look.

The Bliaut Revealed:
The garment itself is not beyond the skills of the artisans of the period, actually it was well within the skills of the seamstresses given a bit of innovation and lots of time. The pleating is not a documented sewing technique that I have found, at least to this extent, however, no examples of this garment yet exist into our time, so it is impossible to tell if pleating was taken to this extreme during this period. Looking at the finished statuary, I have to conclude that pleating rather than smocking or gathering is the most likely technique used to result in the particular silhouette of the garment.

This pleating technique is time consuming, but quite lovely when it is finished. The garment, using this technique, would have been based on a T-tunic pattern, just starting out very large, probably involving the full width of the fabric available for each side, thereby needing the length of 4 dresses for the body of the dress plus fabric for two sleeves, pleated into the shoulders and midsection until the dress is formfitting though the body to the hips, falling in neat, graceful pleats to the floor as it has been shown in the drawings and statuary from the period.

Now why would the artisans of the time use such a time consuming technique as hand pleating an entire garment to fit and spending hours embroidering over the pleats? We can't really know the answer to that, but my belief is that at this time in history, rich, fine silks were becoming available to the courts of France through trade with the Holy Lands. These fine silks intimidate me now even with modern scissors, but most likely would have intrigued and intimidated the artisans of the day presenting a unique challenge. Not wanting to cut the fabric with the scissors available in Iron Age Europe, they invented another process to shape the fabric. It may have been that the fine silk fabric was so valuable, they didn't want to discard a scrap of it; they were afraid to cut it; or they just came up with idea, there is now no way to know, of course. It is certainly possible that this method of construction enabled the seamstresses of the time to use more fabric thus displaying the wearer's wealth. Fine silks would have been worth their weight in gold, if not more, so wearing yards and yards of fine silk would have proclaimed the wearer's status loudly.

It is reasonable to say that the bliaut was, indeed, a transitional garment, coming between the loose and simple T-Tunic and the more fitted and complicated cotehardie of later periods. It is just possible that the pleating technique used to fit the bliaut helped shape later patterns, however that is just a guess. My guess is that the ladies of the day wanted something more elegant than a T-tunic from the fine silks that were becoming available and the leap from a T-tunic to the pleated bliaut was a logical step given the skills and tools of the time. The step to the fitted bliaut was the first time a fitted garment was worn that was purposely fitted through the waist and hips and must have been the haute couture of the day, nothing short of the medieval Channel.

The Construction:
The method of construction is simple in theory and a bit more time consuming in practice. The width of the garment at the bottom of the skirt is equal to the top of the garment, it is all fitted to the wearer by making small pleats in the fabric which are sewn over to fix them in place. The pattern is that of a simple T-tunic without the gores on the sides, just two rectangles, one for the front and one for the back. I find it best if both the front and back are made up of the full width of the fabric piece, so that each rectangle contains 2 widths of the fabric and cut longer than the garment is intended to be. The pleating and sewing take up more length than you would imagine. The front seam where the two widths of the fabric are sewn together will be the center front of the garment and the same thing for the back, but it will be the center back.

Now you can begin pleating. The pleating will begin at the shoulder and neck and then again at the midsection or waist. This is a time intensive process and takes patience, I've found. Keeping the pleats even is the trick to this technique. Pleat the fabric to the measurement from shoulder to shoulder of the wearer, leaving space for the neck, of course. Make the pleats as long as you wish, but longer pleats mold the fabric better to the body of the wearer. However, keep these pleats as even as possible as they affect the pleats at the midsection and how the skirt falls.
My personal technique for pleating is folding, pinning with straight pins, and repeating until the desired width

The mysterious bliaut revealed...the conclusion

is achieved. This allows for fixing mistakes and adjustments by simply moving the pins. Once the I have the pleats in to the proper width and as evenly spaced as possible, I baste the pleats in place with a single thread later to be removed, press them down and draw the lines for the beginning of my embroidery. I draw the horizontal lines so that they are straight, and take the rest of the pattern from that. You will notice that once the horizontal lines are embroidered by using either a chain stitch or split stitch, the pleats make box shapes. I embroider an X in each box then a + over that in a contrasting color of thread. This simple embroidery makes a star shape and can continue the width of the garment, eventually resulting in fixing the pleats in place.

Once the front and back neck/shoulder are done, you can move on to the midsection. This is a bit more of a challenge in shape, though the pleats are usually evident by now from having been secured at the shoulders. The statues show that the front midsection was a convex shape or bowed out, but tell us nothing about the back. I'm assuming that the back was a concave shape or bowed in for the purpose of this garment and ease of fitting. The design I chose was to have a border around the midsection top and bottom and then horizontal lines within the rest of the design. The width of the midsection should be just a bit larger than the measurement of the wearer's midsection. You can adjust the pleats to fit this measurement but remember that the embroidery stitches will pull it in a bit.

Sleeves are shown to be large and flowing, angel type in design. I have continued the pleating method to the shoulders of the sleeves and embroidered the tops of the sleeves to achieve the effect I wanted. I believe that the design of the sleeves are pretty open to discussion and imagination, given the skills and tastes of the time. They could be long and pointed, or open and flowing, but always show a tight-sleeved undergarment with the bliaut.

This technique is intensive in detail and hand sewing, but simple in cutting. I think it has been in front of us all this time, but not seen because we no longer fit dresses by pleating methods, nor have we done this for many centuries. It is a technique lost to time, so lost that there is no name for this technique. We have smocking and shearing, but no name for this pleating method that the seamstresses of this long ago time used to fit the fine fabrics they found in their hands. Though the name is lost, the technique need not be entirely lost. With some practice, this pleating method can create new bliauts equally as lovely and flowing as the original gowns were.

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Angers Cathedral, West Door

A Statistical Survey of Given Names in Essex Co., England, 1182-1272 by Mistress Nicolaa de Bracton of Leicester.

Scope of the Project:

In talking with members of the College of Heralds, I found that there was still a great deal of research to be done into naming practices in the Middle Ages. Much of the existing research deals with documenting given names or surnames to their first recorded occurrence, or to simply compiling lists of names suitable for Society use. Originally, when I began this research project, my intentions followed closely that latter pattern: I wished to show the variety of Anglo-Norman names available and to perhaps dispel the myth that names from that period were limited in number and somehow ³boring². My scope, however, expanded considerably with time and as I discussed the matter with senior heralds, who were more interested in the actual patterns of naming practices in the Middle Ages, rather than simply compiling lists of usable names. Thus, the results of my research should satisfy two groups of people: People looking for a suitable and documentable given name, and researchers interested in knowing more about the evolution of naming practices.

The legal reforms of Henry II had a decided effect on written records in England. Before Henry II, most court matters were handled locally, through baronial and manor courts, or through borough courts in towns. Records-keeping for both criminal and civil matters was spotty at best; while we do have a limited number of charters dating back to Anglo-Saxon times, the number pales when compared to the explosion of material related to the various royal courts which appears after the 1180's. The reliance on written records at this level had a corresponding effect on lower levels, which began to keep more detailed records of transactions and cases in their jurisdiction .

For this project, I have chosen to focus on one published collection of legal documents, the Essex Feet of Fines, a collection of the outcomes of land transactions in that county . It was quite likely that every free-born man and woman in England was involved in at least one of these actions at some time during his or her life. These transactions took place in the royal Courts of Common Pleas. There, the transaction would be presented as a dispute (fictional or not), which would be settled by the court and recorded in a fines concordia or final concord. As I mentioned, even though the term ³final concord² implies the settlement of a dispute, there was not always a dispute involved. Often these records show us that a lord is simply reassigning land to a new tenant, or that someone has bought some property and is finalizing the deal. Sometimes the records show us that a real dispute is occurring--two people arguing over who should have legal possession of a piece of property, or a woman trying to claim her legal dower (a portion of the family property intended to support her in her widowhood). It is important to remember here that all land in England was ultimately the property of the Crown and that the tenants-in-chief owed service or rent for it. They could in turn become the lords of their own tenants and collect rents or service; these tenants could in turn alienate part of their lands for money or service, and so on down the line. This is termed subinfeudation and was a constant concern of the Crown, which wished to keep as much control as possible over the alienation of the land--the fear being that someone could acquire large amounts of land and become a great lord (and thus, a large power base) without being directly answerable to the Crown. Thus, all land transactions after the 1180's took place in royal courts.

These final concords were drafted by a notary in triplicate on a single piece of parchment: two columns of identical text placed side by side, and a third placed at the bottom or ³foot² of the document. Once the case was decided, each party got a copy and the courts kept the ³foot² for their own records . Thus, charter sources from these decisions generally fall into two categories: those kept in private books of charters, and those kept in official ones. Into the former category fall cartularies (books of charters) assembled by abbeys and churches concerning their own lands (an important source, given that about one-third of English lands were ultimately held by the Church--though they, like any major lord in England, had many tenants) and other such collections. Into the latter are the ³feet of fines², which were kept by county. Why did I choose Essex County in particular? I had already become familiar with the Essex records in another project, so it was natural to return to an 'old friend', as it were. I had originally planned to use collections from other counties as well; unfortunately, the indices in some of the other published records collections are not so well organized as the Essex collection, which made it quite likely that one could end up counting the same person three or four times, thus throwing off the statistics. I was happy to find that the Essex records alone attested to over 5500 individuals--a good-sized sample for the purposes of statistical analysis. I do intend in the future to broaden the scope of my inquiry to include other parts of England. I must mention in passing that feet of fines are not the only kind of record which may be of interest to those doing research into naming practices. There are also, for example, several series of 'rolls' (so named because they were kept on rolls of parchment) related to both the royal chancery and exchequer; the four most significant are the Pipe Rolls, Liberate Rolls, Close Rolls, and Patent Rolls .

A Statistical Survey of Given Names in Essex Co, England

Both collections of feet of fines and cartularies have a distinct advantage over traditional narrative histories in that far more people are mentioned in these types of records, and these people are from a wide range of socioeconomic classes, which can often be determined by noting the size of the properties transferred and the number of times a particular person appears as either lord or tenant. As such, they give the researcher a much wider view of naming practices in the whole of the population, as opposed to just the nobility. Additionally, while women do not appear as often as men in these records, they still appear far more frequently than in narrative histories.

The main limitation of these sources for the purpose of name research is that they are in Latin. Most names in use in England at this time were either of Anglo-Saxon or Norman-French origin, so notaries were forced to Latinize them, making it sometimes difficult to ascertain exactly how the name was spelled and used in the vernacular. Furthermore, especially in the case of women, not all scribes Latinized the same name in the same way; there are even scribes who apparently did not Latinize at all. Generally, notaries simply added -us onto male names which did not already have an established Latin form (e.g., those not in the Bible) or one which can be conjugated according to Latin grammatical rules; and either -ia or -a onto female names with no established Latin form (dropping any silent final 'e'), unless the name ended with 'l' or 'd', in which case the ending '-is' was sometimes added instead. (Sometimes this could lead to a second 'a' being added to names which already ended in 'a' : Nicola => Nicolaa). Finally, there is the matter of abbreviations. Notaries would often abbreviate personal or placenames by truncating the name and adding an apostrophe at the end (i.e., Leycestr' = Leycestria or Leycestrensis); the reader was expected to know and supply the correct ending, depending on the context and grammar. Especially for obscure place names, it is sometimes difficult to determine what the full name actually was (though one can speculate if one has a decent knowledge of Latin and the way it works for place names. Orbis Latinus may help remedy this problem). Another limitation is that editors have sometimes translated charters into English and inconsistently Anglicized names back out of Latin, or imposed modern spellings onto older names. A final fact of which the researcher should be aware is the problem of spelling. The letters 'i' and 'y' are almost always interchangeable; 'f' and 'ph' are also used interchangeably; and unaspirated 'h' may pop in and out of names (e.g., Umfery/Humfery; Saer/Saher). When looking for documentation for a particular spelling for names from this period, these rules should be kept in mind.

Methodology:

My methodology was very simple. Using the index to the Essex Feet of Fines, I simply recorded each instance of a particular name. This took about 15 hours of work to complete. After the tallies were complete, I entered the names into a database, sorting them in two ways: Alphabetically, and by frequency of occurrence. The percentage calculations were determined by dividing the number of examples of a particular name by the total sample size. The results are to be found in the listings following the text of this article.

Observations and Conclusions on the Data from the Feet of Fines for Essex

It is quite striking to note the wide variety of names in circulation for both men and women (including names of Anglo-Saxon, Norman-French, and Welsh origin), but it is equally striking to note how dominant a relatively small number of names are for both sexes. The top twenty men[1]s names account for just over 80% of the men named; the top twenty female names account for 71% of the women. The size of this sample was quite large, so small errors which may have crept into the data through counting errors and the like are not likely to disturb the overall picture. This data covers an entire century in Essex, so it is not easy to identify trends in 'popular names' other than the very general ones I noted, partially because while the documents themselves are dated, it is impossible to date the lifespans of the people named therein. More useful would be to compare this data with either similar data from another area of England (perhaps a northern one) to determine whether these popularity trends are localized; or, alternately, to do a similar survey of names from feet of fines in Essex during the next century, perhaps up to the end of the reign of Edward III, to determine how these trends change with time.

A final note: It is interesting to see the relationship between royal names and their popularity amongst the people at large. Henry III named his eldest son Edward, after his patron saint, Edward the Confessor . The name does not seem to have been popular in England at that time, and even at Edward's accession in 1272, if the Essex information is to be believed, it was still not a common name. It shall be interesting to see in future studies how one hundred years under monarchs named Edward affects the popularity of Edward as a given name.

A Word on Surnames

While my primary interest in this paper was to examine given names, I will add a few notes on surnames. In the Essex Feet of Fines alone, nearly 4000 individual surnames are attested. The sheer volume of names thus makes including a listing in this article little more than a copy of the index. Rather than do that, I have photocopied the index as an appendix to this article ; eventually, I hope to use a scanner to merge this information for easy consultation.

A Statistical Survey of Given Names in Essex Co, England

The surnames in the Essex records fall into several broad categories:

Patri- and matrinomics. These names are constructed as follows: name Fitzfather¹s or mother¹s name. It is difficult to tell whether these have become formalized surnames which do not change from generation to generation.

Occupational names: There are many of these in the records. Some appear to be well on their way to becoming surnames, rather then simply descriptive epithets; but others are clearly not surnames. They may or may not be proceeded by a definite article (le,la, l', the). A list of those from the Essex fines: (most are preceded by a definite article)

Baker	Forester
Botiller/Boteyller/ Butler	Frankelyn
Brazur	Fucher
Bruerer	Fuller
Bucher	Goldsmith
Carpenter	Marchant/Marchand/ Merchant
Carver	Mareschal/Marshal
Carter/Chareter	Miller
Chamberlain	Parker
Cancellar	Paumer
Chaplain	Peleter
Chastelain	Ploughman
Cirographar	Porter
Clerk	Priest
Constable/Cunstable	Shoemaker
Cordewaner	Smith
Cornmonger/Cornier	Taillur/Tayllur/Taylor
Despenser/Dispenser	Tanner
Doreward	Vintner
Draper	Wodeward
Ferur	

Descriptive names: Most usually either based on physical characteristics or on nationality. Again, some have become inherited surnames and others are not formalized.

Place names: These fall into two categories: Actual place-names, and surnames derived from placenames. These are often difficult to tell apart. Generally, anyone with a surname with the form (place)-ensis is likely to be a resident of or a recent arrivee from the mentioned place. It is a bit more difficult when dealing with names of the form de + placename. With the Essex data, one can tentatively conclude that if someone has a name of the form de + (place in Essex) that that person actually lives in that place and that the surname is more properly a placename, though it may be evolving into a proper surname. In the majority of the cases, however, it seems that names of this form are actually family names by this time. Finally, we have a few names constructed in the form att(e) +geographical feature or name of the + geographical feature. Most of the former category seem to be approaching true surnames, while most of the latter do not seem to be inherited.

Other surnames: These seem to be, for the most part, names originally of one of
the other categories in which definite articles (le, la, l', the) or
prepositions (fitz, atte, de) have dropped off.

In general, the best way to understand how these surnames worked is to view them in action; see the index in the Essex Feet of Fines .

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The Dispute, 12th Century, Artist Unknown

FRENCH MEDIAEVAL ROMANCES
From the Lays of Marie de France
Translated by
Eugene Mason
1911

PROLOGUE

BY WAY OF DEDICATION

Those to whom God has given the gift of comely speech, should not hide their light beneath a bushel, but should willingly show it abroad. If a great truth is proclaimed in the ears of men, it brings forth fruit a hundred-fold; but when the sweetness of the telling is praised of many, flowers mingle with the fruit upon the branch.

According to the witness of Priscian, it was the custom of ancient writers to express obscurely some portions of their books, so that those who came after might study with greater diligence to find the thought within their words. The philosophers knew this well, and were the more unwearied in labour, the more subtle in distinctions, so that the truth might make them free. They were persuaded that he who would keep himself unspotted from the world should search for knowledge, that he might understand. To set evil from me, and to put away my grief, I purposed to commence a book. I considered within myself what fair story in the Latin or Romance I could turn into the common tongue. But I found that all the stories had been written, and scarcely it seemed the worth my doing, what so many had already done. Then I called to mind those Lays I had so often heard. I doubted nothing—for well I know—that our fathers fashioned them, that men should bear in remembrance the deeds of those who have gone before. Many a one, on many a day, the minstrel has chanted to my ear. I would not that they should perish, forgotten, by the roadside. In my turn, therefore, I have made of them a song, rhymed as well as I am able, and often has their shaping kept me sleepless in my bed.

In your honour, most noble and courteous King, to whom joy is a handmaid, and in whose heart all gracious things are rooted, I have brought together these Lays, and told my tales in seemly rhyme. Ere they speak for me, let me speak with my own mouth, and say, "Sire, I offer you these verses. If you are pleased to receive them, the fairer happiness will be mine, and the more lightly I shall go all the days of my life. Do not deem that I think more highly of myself than I ought to think, since I presume to proffer this, my gift." Hearken now to the commencement of the matter.

V.

THE LAY OF THE NIGHTINGALE

Now will I tell you a story, whereof the Breton harper already has made a Lay. Laustic, I deem, men name it in that country, which, being interpreted, means rossignol in French, and nightingale in good plain English.

In the realm of Brittany stands a certain rich and mighty city, called Saint Malo. There were citizens of this township two knights, so well spoken and reputed of all, that the city drew therefrom great profit and fame. The houses of these lords were very near the one to the other. One of the two knights had to wife a passing fair lady, right gracious of manner and sweet of tongue. Wondrous pleasure found this dame to array herself richly, after the wont and fashion of her time. The other knight was yet a bachelor. He was well accounted of amongst his fellows as a hardy knight and as an honourable man. He gave hospitality gladly. Largely he gained, largely he spent, and willingly bestowed gifts of all that he had.

This bachelor set his love upon his neighbour's wife. By reason of his urgent prayers, his long suit and service, and by reason that all men spake naught of him but praise—perchance, also, for reason that he was never far from her eye—presently this lady came to set her heart on him again. Though these two friends loved right tenderly, yet were they so private and careful in their loves that none perceived what was in their hearts. No man pried on them, or disturbed their goings and comings. These were the more easy to devise since the bachelor and the lady were such near neighbours. Their two houses stood side by side, hall and cellar and combles. Only between the gardens was built a high and ancient wall, of worn gray stone. When the lady sat within her bower, by leaning from the casement she and her friend might speak together, he to her, and she to him. They could also throw messages in writing, and divers pretty gifts, the one to the other. Little enough had they to displease them, and greatly were they at their ease, save only that they might not take their pleasure together, so often as their hearts had wished. For the dame was guarded very straitly when her husband was abroad. Yet not so strictly but that they might have word and speech, the now by night and now by day. At least, however close the watch and ward, none might hinder that at times these fair lovers stood within their casements, and looked fondly on the other's face.

Now after these friends had loved for a great space it chanced that the season became warm and sweet. It was the time when meadow and copse are green; when orchards grow white with bloom, and birds break into song as thickly as the bush to flower. It is the season

Medieval Romances from Marie de France...continued

when he who loves would win to his desire. Truly I tell you that the knight would have done all in his power to attain his wish, and the lady, for her part, yearned for sight and speech of her friend. At night, when the moon shone clearly in the sky, and her lord lay sleeping at her side, often the dame slipped softly from her bed, and hastening to the casement, leaned forth to have sight of him who watched. The greater part of the dark they kept vigil together, for very pleasant it is to look upon your friend, when sweeter things are denied.

This chanced so often, and the lady rose so frequently from her bed, that her lord was altogether wrathful, and many a time inquired the reason of her unrest.

"Husband," replied the dame, "there is no dearer joy in this world, than to hear the nightingale sing. It is to hearken to the song that rises so sweetly on the night, that I lean forth from the casement. What tune of harp or viol is half so fair! Because of my delight in his song, and of my desire to hear, I may not shut my eyes till it be morn."

When the husband heard the lady's words he laughed within himself for wrath and malice. He purposed that very soon the nightingale should sing within a net. So he bade the servants of his house to devise fillets and snares, and to set their cunning traps about the orchard. Not a chestnut tree nor hazel within the garth but was limed and netted for the caging of this bird. It was not long therefore ere the nightingale was taken, and the servants made haste to give him to the pleasure of their lord. Wondrous merry was the knight when he held him living in his hand. He went straightway to the chamber of his dame, and entering, said,

"Wife, are you within? Come near, for I must speak with you. Here is the nightingale, all limed and taken, who made vigil of your sleeping hours. Take now your rest in peace, for he will never disturb you more."

When the lady understood these words she was marvellously sorrowful and heavy. She prayed her lord to grant her the nightingale for a gift. But for all answer he wrung his neck with both hands so fiercely that the head was torn from the body. Then, right foully, he flung the bird upon the knees of the dame, in such fashion that her breast was sprinkled with the blood. So he departed, incontinent, from the chamber in a rage.

The lady took the little body in her hands, and wept his evil fate. She railed on those who with nets and snares had betrayed the nightingale to his death; for anger and hate beyond measure had gained hold on her heart.

"Alas," cried she, "evil is come upon me. Never again may I rise from my bed in the night, and watch from the casement, so that I may see my friend. One thing I know full well, that he will deem my love is no more set upon him. Woe to her who has none to give her counsel. This I will do. I will bestow the nightingale upon him, and send him tidings of the chance that has befallen."

So this doleful lady took a fair piece of white samite, broidered with gold, and wrought thereon the whole story of this adventure. In this silken cloth she wrapped the body of the little bird, and calling to her a trusty servant of her house, charged him with the message, and bade him bear it to her friend. The varlet went his way to the knight, and having saluted him on the part of the lady, he told over to him the story, and bestowed the nightingale upon him. When all had been rehearsed and shown to him, and he had well considered the matter, the knight was very dolent; yet in no wise would he avenge himself wrongfully. So he caused a certain coffret to be fashioned, made not of iron or steel, but of fine gold and fair stones, most rich and precious, right strongly clasped and bound. In this little chest he set the body of the nightingale, and having sealed the shrine, carried it upon him whenever his business took him abroad.

This adventure could not long be hid. Very swiftly it was noised about the country, and the Breton folk made a Lay thereon, which they called the Lay of the Laustic, in their own tongue.

Medieval Romances from Marie de France...continued

VII

THE LAY OF THE TWO LOVERS

Once upon a time there lived in Normandy two lovers, who were passing fond, and were brought by Love to Death. The story of their love was bruited so abroad, that the Bretons made a song in their own tongue, and named this song the Lay of the Two Lovers.

In Neustria—that men call Normandy—there is verily a high and marvellously great mountain, where lie the relics of the Two Children. Near this high place the King of those parts caused to be built a certain fair and cunning city, and since he was lord of the Pistrians, it was known as Pistres. The town yet endures, with its towers and houses, to bear witness to the truth; moreover the country thereabouts is known to us all as the Valley of Pistres.

This King had one fair daughter, a damsel sweet of face and gracious of manner, very near to her father's heart, since he had lost his Queen. The maiden increased in years and favour, but he took no heed to her trothing, so that men—yea, even his own people—blamed him greatly for this thing. When the King heard thereof he was passing heavy and dolent, and considered within himself how he might be delivered from this grief. So then, that none should carry off his child, he caused it to be proclaimed, both far and near, by script and trumpet, that he alone should wed the maid, who would bear her in his arms, to the pinnacle of the great and perilous mountain, and that without rest or stay. When this news was noised about the country, many came upon the quest. But strive as they would they might not enforce themselves more than they were able. However mighty they were of body, at the last they failed upon the mountain, and fell with their burthen to the ground. Thus, for a while, was none so bold as to seek the high Princess.

Now in this country lived a squire, son to a certain count of that realm, seemly of semblance and courteous, and right desirous to win that prize, which was so coveted of all. He was a welcome guest at the Court, and the King talked with him very willingly. This squire had set his heart upon the daughter of the King, and many a time spoke in her ear, praying her to give him again the love he had bestowed upon her. So seeing him brave and courteous, she esteemed him for the gifts which gained him the favour of the King, and they loved together in their youth. But they hid this matter from all about the Court. This thing was very grievous to them, but the damoiseau thought within himself that it were good to bear the pains he knew, rather than to seek out others that might prove sharper still. Yet in the end, altogether distraught by love, this prudent varlet sought his friend, and showed her his case, saying that he urgently required of her that she would flee with him, for no longer could he endure the weariness of his days. Should he ask her of the King, well he knew that by reason of his love he would refuse the gift, save he bore her in his arms up the steep mount. Then the maiden made answer to her lover, and said,

"Fair friend, well I know you may not carry me to that high place. Moreover should we take to flight, my father would suffer wrath and sorrow beyond measure, and go heavily all his days. Certainly my love is too fond to plague him thus, and we must seek another counsel, for this is not to my heart. Hearken well. I have kindred in Salerno, of rich estate. For more than thirty years my aunt has studied there the art of medicine, and knows the secret gift of every root and herb. If you hasten to her, bearing letters from me, and show her your adventure, certainly she will find counsel and cure. Doubt not that she will discover some cunning simple, that will strengthen your body, as well as comfort your heart. Then return to this realm with your potion, and ask me at my father's hand. He will deem you but a stripling, and set forth the terms of his bargain, that to him alone shall I be given who knows how to climb the perilous mountain, without pause or rest, bearing his lady between his arms."

When the varlet heard this cunning counsel of the maiden, he rejoiced greatly, and thanking her sweetly for her rede, craved permission to depart. He returned to his own home, and gathering together a goodly store of silken cloths most precious, he bestowed his gear upon the pack horses, and made him ready for the road. So with a little company of men, mounted on swift palfreys, and most privy to his mind, he arrived at Salerno. Now the squire made no long stay at his lodging, but as soon as he might, went to the damsel's kindred to open out his mind. He delivered to the aunt the letters he carried from his friend, and bewailed their evil case. When the dame had read these letters with him, line by line, she charged him to lodge with her awhile, till she might do according to his wish. So by her sorceries, and for the love of her maid, she brewed such a potion that no man, however wearied and outworn, but by drinking this philtre, would not be refreshed in heart and blood and bones. Such virtue had this medicine, directly it were drunken. This simple she poured within a little flacket, and gave it to the varlet, who received the gift with great joy and delight, and returned swiftly to his own land.

The varlet made no long sojourn in his home. He repaired straightway to the Court, and, seeking out the King, required of him his fair daughter in marriage, promising, for his part, that were she given him, he would bear her in his arms to the summit of the mount. The King was no wise wrath at his presumption. He

Medieval Romances from Marie de France...continued

smiled rather at his folly, for how should one so young and slender succeed in a business wherein so many mighty men had failed. Therefore he appointed a certain day for this judgment. Moreover he caused letters to be written to his vassals and his friends—passing none by—bidding them to see the end of this adventure. Yea, with public cry and sound of trumpet he bade all who would, come to behold the stripling carry his fair daughter to the pinnacle of the mountain. And from every region round about men came to learn the issue of this thing. But for her part the fair maiden did all that she was able to bring her love to a good end. Ever was it fast day and fleshless day with her, so that by any means she might lighten the burthen that her friend must carry in his arms.

Now on the appointed day this young dansellon came very early to the appointed place, bringing the flacket with him. When the great company were fully met together, the King led forth his daughter before them; and all might see that she was arrayed in nothing but her smock. The varlet took the maiden in his arms, but first he gave her the flask with the precious brewage to carry, since for pride he might not endure to drink therefrom, save at utmost peril. The squire set forth at a great pace, and climbed briskly till he was halfway up the mount. Because of the joy he had in clasping his burthen, he gave no thought to the potion. But she—she knew the strength was failing in his heart.

"Fair friend," said she, "well I know that you tire: drink now, I pray you, of the flacket, and so shall your manhood come again at need."

But the varlet answered,

"Fair love, my heart is full of courage; nor for any reason will I pause, so long as I can hold upon my way. It is the noise of all this folk—the tumult and the shouting—that makes my steps uncertain. Their cries distress me, I do not dare to stand."

But when two thirds of the course was won, the grasshopper would have tripped him off his feet. Urgently and often the maiden prayed him, saying,

"Fair friend, drink now of thy cordial."

But he would neither hear, nor give credence to her words. A mighty anguish filled his bosom. He climbed upon the summit of the mountain, and pained himself grievously to bring his journey to an end. This he might not do. He reeled and fell, nor could he rise again, for the heart had burst within his breast.

When the maiden saw her lover's piteous plight, she deemed that he had swooned by reason of his pain. She kneeled hastily at his side, and put the enchanted brewage to his lips, but he could neither drink nor speak, for he was dead, as I have told you. She bewailed his evil lot, with many shrill cries, and flung the useless flacket far away. The precious potion bestrewed the ground, making a garden of that desolate place. For many saving herbs have been found there since that day by the simple folk of that country, which from the magic philtre derived all their virtue.

But when the maiden knew that her lover was dead, she made such wondrous sorrow, as no man had ever seen. She kissed his eyes and mouth, and falling upon his body, took him in her arms, and pressed him closely to her breast. There was no heart so hard as not to be touched by her sorrow; for in this fashion died a dame, who was fair and sweet and gracious, beyond the wont of the daughters of men.

Now the King and his company, since these two lovers came not again, presently climbed the mountain to learn their end. But when the King came upon them lifeless, and fast in that embrace, incontinent he fell to the ground, bereft of sense. After his speech had returned to him, he was passing heavy, and lamented their doleful case, and thus did all his people with him.

Three days they kept the bodies of these two fair children from earth, with uncovered face. On the third day they sealed them fast in a goodly coffin of marble, and by the counsel of all men, laid them softly to rest on that mountain where they died. Then they departed from them, and left them together, alone.

Since this adventure of the Two Children this hill is known as the Mountain of the Two Lovers, and their story being bruited abroad, the Breton folk have made a Lay thereof, even as I have rehearsed before you.

Medieval Romances from Marie de France...concluded

X

THE LAY OF THE HONEYSUCKLE

With a glad heart and right good mind will I tell the Lay that men call Honeysuckle; and that the truth may be known of all it shall be told as many a minstrel has sung it to my ear, and as the scribe hath written it for our delight. It is of Tristan and Isoude, the Queen. It is of a love which passed all other love, of love from whence came wondrous sorrow, and whereof they died together in the self-same day.

King Mark was sorely wrath with Tristan, his sister's son, and bade him avoid his realm, by reason of the love he bore the Queen. So Tristan repaired to his own land, and dwelt for a full year in South Wales, where he was born. Then since he might not come where he would be, Tristan took no heed to his ways, but let his life run waste to Death. Marvel not overmuch thereat, for he who loves beyond measure must ever be sick in heart and hope, when he may not win according to his wish. So sick in heart and mind was Tristan that he left his kingdom, and returned straight to the realm of his banishment, because that in Cornwall dwelt the Queen. There he hid privily in the deep forest, withdrawn from the eyes of men; only when the evening was come, and all things sought their rest, he prayed the peasant and other mean folk of that country, of their charity to grant him shelter for the night. From the serf he gathered tidings of the King. These gave again to him what they, in turn, had taken from some outlawed knight. Thus Tristan learned that when Pentecost was come King Mark purposed to hold high Court at Tintagel, and keep the feast with pomp and revelry; moreover that thither would ride Isoude, the Queen.

When Tristan heard this thing he rejoiced greatly, since the Queen might not adventure through the forest, except he saw her with his eyes. After the King had gone his way, Tristan entered within the wood, and sought the path by which the Queen must come. There he cut a wand from out a certain hazel-tree, and having trimmed and peeled it of its bark, with his dagger he carved his name upon the wood. This he placed upon her road, for well he knew that should the Queen but mark his name she would bethink her of her friend. Thus had it chanced before. For this was the sum of the writing set upon the wand, for Queen Isoude's heart alone: how that in this wild place Tristan had lurked and waited long, so that he might look upon her face, since without her he was already dead. Was it not with them as with the Honeysuckle and the Hazel tree she was passing by! So sweetly laced and taken were they in one close embrace, that thus they might remain whilst life endured. But should rough hands part so fond a clasping, the hazel would wither at the root, and the honeysuckle must fail. Fair friend, thus is the case with us, nor you without me, nor I without you.

Now the Queen fared at adventure down the forest path. She spied the hazel wand set upon her road, and well she remembered the letters and the name. She bade the knights of her company to draw rein, and dismount from their palfreys, so that they might refresh themselves a little. When her commandment was done she withdrew from them a space, and called to her Brangwaine, her maiden, and own familiar friend. Then she hastened within the wood, to come on him whom more she loved than any living soul. How great the joy between these twain, that once more they might speak together softly, face to face. Isoude showed him her delight. She showed in what fashion she strove to bring peace and concord betwixt Tristan and the King, and how grievously his banishment had weighed upon her heart. Thus sped the hour, till it was time for them to part; but when these lovers freed them from the other's arms, the tears were wet upon their cheeks. So Tristan returned to Wales, his own realm, even as his uncle bade. But for the joy that he had had of her, his friend, for her sweet face, and for the tender words that she had spoken, yea, and for that writing upon the wand, to remember all these things, Tristan, that cunning harper, wrought a new Lay, as shortly I have told you. Goatleaf, men call this song in English. Chèvrefeuille it is named in French; but Goatleaf or Honeysuckle, here you have the very truth in the Lay that I have spoken.

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The SCA is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to learning more about the Middle Ages through reenactment. There are SCA chapters worldwide and they hold regular feasts, tournaments, balls and battles.

The Outlands includes New Mexico, Colorado and parts of Texas and Wyoming.

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